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**For more information contact:  
Rose E. Garland, (314) 539-6600, Ext. 232**

## **SBA 2005 HOME-BASED CHAMPION GOES TO IMPACT BUSINESS DEVELOPERS**

**ST. LOUIS** --Having started Impact Business Developers in 1997 as a St. Louis home-based business under the MarketTech Brand, Kevin Schulte experienced the highs and lows of starting a business from ground zero. He witnessed the highs and lows of his wife starting her own small business. And one generation back, his father owned a parking lot sweeping business that was based out of the home as he was growing up.

These enriching experiences enabled Kevin to eventually grow the business to the point of moving the company to the St. Louis County Enterprise Center in 2002. It was quite an exciting, and yet worries-some, time for Kevin. Then, when Kevin had his business on solid footing, he felt obligated to voluntarily improve upon the startup process that Impact Business Developers successfully navigated.

To the end, he spent hundreds of hours, a majority of them voluntary, over the past couple years, mentoring and coaching all sorts of newly formed home-based businesses. He provided \$25,000 of Angel/seed money to three home-based business startups with the understanding that there was no rush to pay the money back. He believed in their ideas and wanted to be a part of their successes, if they ended up that way. He volunteers as a mentor to a couple of the Washington University Hatchery companies as they developed their business plans and competed in an academic exercise to startup new businesses.

By far his most personally rewarding endeavor has been the establishment of the St. Louis-MO Virtual Incubator (STLVI). Several companies have launched their small business (mostly home-based) with the support of this virtual incubator program. The STLVI is a six-month business coaching and mentoring program set up specifically for early stage companies in the information technology (including biotech), telecom and the business-to-business industrial sector.

There is what can best be described as a stipend when Kevin works with entrepreneurs that come through STLVI. However, to date, it has been on a non-profit basis. All board meetings and planning efforts have been pure voluntary for Kevin. He has spent up to 75 hours planning the expansion of the STLVI program to one to two new entrepreneurs/ideas a month and incorporating as a non-profit in the state of Missouri. The STLVI will increase its services to include technology transfer from research organizations such as Saint Louis University and Washington University, access to capital markets and financial consulting.

And all of this is why Kevin Schulte, president of Impact Business Developers, is the SBA 2005 St. Louis District Home-Based Business Champion of the Year.

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